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ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT
AT CHAUTAUQUA, NEW YORK,
AUGUST 11, 1905



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1905



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To-day I wish to speak to you on one feature of our national foreign policy and one feature of our national domestic policy.

The Monroe Doctrine is not a part of international law. But it is the fundamental feature of our entire foreign policy so far as the Western Hemisphere is con-

cerned, and it has more and more been meeting with recognition abroad. The reason why it is meeting with this recognition is because we have not allowed it to become fossilized, but have adapted our construction of it to meet the growing, changing needs of this hemisphere. Fossilization, of course, means death, whether to an individual, a government, or a doctrine.

It is out of the question to claim a right and yet shirk the responsibility for exer-

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cising that right. When we announce a policy such as the Monroe Doctrine we thereby commit ourselves to accepting the consequences of the policy, and these consequences from time to time alter.

Let us look for a moment at what the Monroe Doctrine really is.¹ It forbids the territorial encroachment of non-American powers on American soil. Its purpose is partly to secure this Nation against seeing great military powers obtain new footholds in the Western Hemisphere, and partly to

secure to our fellow-republics south of us
the chance to develop along their own
lines without being oppressed or con-
quered by non-American powers." As we
have grown more and more powerful our
advocacy of this doctrine has been re-
ceived with more and more respect; but
what has tended most to give the doc-
trine standing among the nations is our
growing willingness to show that we not
only mean what we say and are prepared
to back it up, but that we mean to recog-

nize our obligations to foreign peoples no less than to insist upon our own rights.

" We can not permanently adhere to the Monroe Doctrine unless we succeed in making it evident in the first place that we do not intend to treat it in any shape or way as an excuse for aggrandizement on our part at the expense of the republics to the south of us; second, that we do not intend to permit it to be used by any of these republics as a shield to protect that republic from the conse-

quences of its own misdeeds against foreign nations; third, that inasmuch as by this doctrine we prevent other nations from interfering on this side of the water, we shall ourselves in good faith try to help those of our sister republics, which need such help, upward toward peace and order.

As regards the first point we must recognize the fact that in some South American countries there has been much suspicion lest we should interpret the Mon-

roe Doctrine in some way inimical to their interests. Now let it be understood once for all that no just and orderly government on this continent has anything to fear from us. There are certain of the republics south of us which have already reached such a point of stability, order, and prosperity that they are themselves, although as yet hardly consciously, among the guarantors of this doctrine. No stable and growing American republic wishes to see some great non-American military power

acquire territory in its neighborhood.

It is the interest of all of us on this con-

tinent that no such event should occur,

and in addition to our own Republic there

are now already republics in the regions

south of us which have reached a point of

prosperity and power that enables them

to be considerable factors in maintaining

this doctrine which is so much to the

advantage of all of us. It must be under-

stood that under no circumstances will

the United States use the Monroe Doc-

trine as a cloak for territorial aggression.

Should any of our neighbors, no matter

how turbulent, how disregardful of our

rights, finally get into such a position that

the utmost limits of our forbearance are

reached, all the people south of us may

rest assured that no action will ever be

taken save what is absolutely demanded

by our self-respect; that this action will

not take the form of territorial aggran-

dizement on our part, and that it will

only be taken at all with the most extreme

reluctance and not without having exhausted every effort to avert it.

As to the second point, if a republic to the south of us commits a tort against a foreign nation, such, for instance, as wrongful action against the persons of citizens of that nation, then the Monroe Doctrine does not force us to interfere to prevent punishment of the tort, save to see that the punishment does not directly or indirectly assume the form of territorial occupation of the offending country. The case is more

difficult when the trouble comes from the failure to meet contractual obligations.

Our own Government has always refused to enforce such contractual obligations on behalf of its citizens by the appeal to arms.

It is much to be wished that all foreign governments would take the same view.

But at present this country would certainly not be willing to go to war to prevent a foreign government from collecting a just debt or to back up some one of our sister republics in a refusal to pay just debts;

and the alternative may in any case prove to be that we shall ourselves undertake to bring about some arrangement by which so much as is possible of the just obligations shall be paid. Personally I should always prefer to see this country step in and put through such an arrangement rather than let any foreign country undertake it.

I do not want to see any foreign power take possession permanently or temporarily of the custom-houses of an American republic in order to enforce

its obligations, and the alternative may at any time be that we shall be forced to do so ourselves.

Finally, and what is in my view, really the most important thing of all, it is our duty, so far as we are able, to try to help upward our weaker brothers. Just as there has been a gradual growth of the ethical element in the relations of one individual to another, so that with all the faults of our Christian civilization it yet remains true that we are, no matter

how slowly, more and more coming to recognize the duty of bearing one another's burdens, similarly I believe that the ethical element is by degrees entering into the dealings of one nation with another.

Under strain of emotion caused by sudden disaster this feeling is very evident. A famine or a plague in one country brings much sympathy and some assistance from other countries. Moreover, we are now beginning to recognize

that weaker peoples have a claim upon us, even when the appeal is made, not to our emotions by some sudden calamity, but to our consciences by a long continuing condition of affairs.

I do not mean to say that nations have more than begun to approach the proper relationship one to another, and I fully recognize the folly of proceeding upon the assumption that this ideal condition can now be realized in full—for, in order to proceed upon such an assump-

tion, we would first require some method of forcing recalcitrant nations to do their duty, as well as of seeing that they are protected in their rights.

In the interest of justice, it is as necessary to exercise the police power as to show charity and helpful generosity. But something can even now be done toward the end in view. That something, for instance, this Nation has already done as regards Cuba, and is now trying to do as regards Santo Do-

mingo. There are few things in our history in which we should take more genuine pride than the way in which we liberated Cuba, and then, instead of instantly abandoning it to chaos, stayed in direction of the affairs of the island until we had put it on the right path, and finally gave it freedom and helped it as it started on the life of an independent republic.

Santo Domingo has now made an appeal to us to help it in turn, and not only every principle of wisdom but every gen-

erous instinct within us bids us respond to the appeal. The conditions in Santo Domingo have for a number of years grown from bad to worse until recently all society was on the verge of dissolution. Fortunately just at this time a wise ruler sprang up in Santo Domingo, who, with his colleagues, saw the dangers threatening their beloved country, and appealed to the friendship of their great and powerful neighbor to help them. The immediate threat came to them in the shape of

foreign intervention. The previous rulers of Santo Domingo had recklessly incurred debts, and owing to her internal disorders she had ceased to be able to provide means of paying the debts. The patience of her foreign creditors had become exhausted, and at least one foreign nation was on the point of intervention and was only prevented from intervening by the unofficial assurance of this Government that it would itself strive to help Santo Domingo in her hour of need. Of

the debts incurred some were just, while some were not of a character which really renders it obligatory on, or proper for, Santo Domingo to pay them in full. But she could not pay any of them at all unless some stability was assured.

Accordingly the Executive Department of our Government negotiated a treaty under which we are to try to help the Dominican people to straighten out their finances. This treaty is pending before the Senate, whose consent to it is nec-

essary. In the meantime we have made a temporary arrangement which will last until the Senate has had time to take action upon the treaty.

Under this arrangement we see to the honest administration of the custom-houses, collecting the revenues, turning over forty-five per cent to the Government for running expenses and putting the other fifty-five per cent into a safe deposit for equitable division among the various creditors, whether European or American, accord-

ingly as, after investigation, their claims seem just.

The custom-houses offer well-nigh the only sources of revenue in Santo Domingo, and the different revolutions usually have as their real aim the obtaining possession of these custom-houses. The mere fact that we are protecting the custom-houses and collecting the revenue with efficiency and honesty has completely discouraged all revolutionary movement, while it has already produced such

an increase in the revenues that the Government is actually getting more from the forty-five per cent that we turn over to it than it got formerly when it took the entire revenue.

This is enabling the poor harrassed people of Santo Domingo once more to turn their attention to industry and to be free from the curse of interminable revolutionary disturbance. It offers to all bona fide creditors, American and European, the only really good chance to obtain that to which

they are justly entitled, while it in return gives to Santo Domingo the only opportunity of defense against claims which it ought not to pay—for now if it meets the views of the Senate we shall ourselves thoroughly examine all these claims, whether American or foreign, and see that none that are improper are paid. Indeed, the only effective opposition to the treaty will probably come from dishonest creditors, foreign and American, and from the professional revolutionists of the island

itself. We have already good reason to believe that some of the creditors who do not dare expose their claims to honest scrutiny are endeavoring to stir up sedition in the island, and are also endeavoring to stir up opposition to the treaty both in Santo Domingo and here, trusting that in one place or the other it may be possible to secure either the rejection of the treaty or else its amendment in such fashion as to be tantamount to rejection.

Under the course taken, stability and

order and all the benefits of peace are at last coming to Santo Domingo, all danger of foreign intervention has ceased, and there is at last a prospect that all creditors will get justice, no more and no less. If the arrangement is terminated, chaos will follow; and if chaos follows, sooner or later this Government may be involved in serious difficulties with foreign governments over the island, or else may be forced itself to intervene in the island in some unpleasant fashion. Under the

present arrangement the independence of the island is scrupulously respected, the danger of violation of the Monroe Doctrine by the intervention of foreign powers vanishes, and the interference of our Government is minimized, so that we only act in conjunction with the Santo Domingo authorities to secure the proper administration of the customs, and therefore to secure the payment of just debts and to secure the Santo Dominican Government against demands for unjust debts.

The present method prevents there being any need of our establishing any kind of protectorate over the island and gives the people of Santo Domingo the same chance to move onward and upward which we have already given to the people of Cuba. It will be doubly to our discredit as a nation if we fail to take advantage of this chance; for it will be of damage to ourselves, and, above all, it will be of incalculable damage to Santo Domingo. Every consideration of wise policy, and,

above all, every consideration of large generosity, bids us meet the request of Santo Domingo as we are now trying to meet it.

So much for one feature of our foreign policy. Now for one feature of our domestic policy. One of the main features of our national governmental policy should be the effort to secure adequate and effective supervisory and regulatory control over all great corporations doing an interstate business.

Much of the legislation aimed to prevent the evils connected with the enormous development of these great corporations has been ineffective, partly because it aimed at doing too much, and partly because it did not confer on the Government a really efficient method of holding any guilty corporation to account. The effort to prevent all restraint of competition, whether harmful or beneficial, has been ill-judged; what is needed is not so much the effort to prevent combination as

a vigilant and effective control of the combinations formed, so as to secure just and equitable dealing on their part alike toward the public generally, toward their smaller competitors, and toward the wage-workers in their employ.

Under the present laws we have in the last four years accomplished much that is of substantial value; but the difficulties in the way have been so great as to prove that further legislation is advisable. Many corporations show them-

selves honorably desirous to obey the law; but, unfortunately, some corporations, and very wealthy ones at that, exhaust every effort which can be suggested by the highest ability, or secured by the most lavish expenditure of money, to defeat the purposes of the laws on the statute books.

Not only the men in control of these corporations, but the business world generally, ought to realize that such conduct is in every way perilous, and constitutes

a menace to the nation generally, and especially to the people of great property.

I earnestly believe that this is true of only a relatively small portion of the very rich men engaged in handling the largest corporations in the country; but the attitude of these comparatively few men does undoubtedly harm the country, and above all harm the men of large means, by the just, but sometimes misguided, popular indignation to which it gives rise. The consolidation in the form of what are

popularly called trusts of corporate interests of immense value has tended to produce unfair restraints of trade of an oppressive character, and these unfair restraints tend to create great artificial monopolies.

The violations of the law known as the anti-trust law, which was meant to meet the conditions thus arising, have more and more become confined to the larger combinations, the very ones against whose policy of monopoly and oppression the policy of the law was chiefly directed.

Many of these combinations by secret methods and by protracted litigation are still unwisely seeking to avoid the consequences of their illegal action.

The Government has very properly exercised moderation in attempting to enforce the criminal provisions of the statute; but it has become our conviction that in some cases, such as that of at least certain of the beef packers recently indicted in Chicago, it is impossible longer to show leniency.

Moreover, if the existing law proves to be

inadequate, so that under established rules of evidence clear violations may not be readily proved, defiance of the law must inevitably lead to further legislation.

This legislation may be more drastic than I would prefer. If so, it must be distinctly understood that it will be because of the stubborn determination of some of the great combinations in striving to prevent the enforcement of the law as it stands, by every device, legal and illegal. Very many of these

men seem to think that the alternative is simply between submitting to the mild kind of governmental control we advocate and the absolute freedom to do whatever they think best. They are greatly in error. Either they will have to submit to reasonable supervision and regulation by the national authorities, or else they will ultimately have to submit to governmental action of a far more drastic type. Personally, I think our people would be most unwise if

they let any exasperation due to the acts of certain great corporations drive them into drastic action, and I should oppose such action. But the great corporations are themselves to blame if by their opposition to what is legal and just they foster the popular feeling which tells for such drastic action.

Some great corporations resort to every technical expedient to render enforcement of the law impossible, and their obstructive tactics and refusal to acquiesce

in the policy of the law have taxed to the utmost the machinery of the Department of Justice. In my judgment Congress may well inquire whether it should not seek other means for carrying into effect the law. I believe that all corporations engaged in interstate commerce should be under the supervision of the National Government. I do not believe in taking steps hastily or rashly, and it may be that all that is necessary in the immediate future is to pass an interstate-commerce bill con-

ferring upon some branch of the executive government the power of effective action to remedy the abuses in connection with railway transportation. But in the end, and in my judgment at a time not very far off, we shall have to, or at least we shall find that we ought to, take further action as regards all corporations doing interstate business. The enormous increase in interstate trade, resulting from the industrial development of the last quarter of a century, makes it proper that the Federal Government

should, so far as may be necessary to carry into effect its national policy, assume a degree of administrative control of these great corporations.

It may well be that we shall find that the only effective way of exercising this supervision is to require all corporations engaged in interstate commerce to produce proof satisfactory, say, to the Department of Commerce, that they are not parties to any contract or combination or engaged in any monopoly in interstate

trade in violation of the anti-trust law, and that their conduct on certain other specified points is proper; and, moreover, that these corporations shall agree, with a penalty of forfeiture of their right to engage in such commerce, to furnish any evidence of any kind as to their trade between the States whenever so required by the Department of Commerce.

It is the almost universal policy of the several States, provided by statute, that foreign corporations may lawfully conduct

business within their boundaries only when they produce certificates that they have complied with the requirements of their respective States; in other words, that corporations shall not enjoy the privileges and immunities afforded by the State governments without first complying with the policy of their laws.

Now the benefits which corporations engaged in interstate trade enjoy under the United States Government are incalculable; and in respect of such trade the jurisdiction

of the Federal Government is supreme when it chooses to exercise it.

When, as is now the case, many of the great corporations consistently strain the last resources of legal technicality to avoid obedience to a law for the reasonable regulation of their business, the only way effectively to meet this attitude on their part is to give to the Executive Department of the Government a more direct and therefore more efficient supervision and control of their management.

In speaking against the abuses committed by certain very wealthy corporations or individuals, and of the necessity of seeking so far as it can safely be done to remedy these abuses, there is always danger lest what is said may be misinterpreted as an attack upon men of means generally.

Now it can not too often be repeated in a Republic like ours that the only way by which it is possible permanently to benefit the condition of the less able and less fortunate, is so to shape our policy that

all industrious and efficient people who act decently may be benefited; and this means, of course, that the benefit will come even more to the more able and more fortunate. If, under such circumstances, the less fortunate man is moved by envy of his more fortunate brother to strike at the conditions under which they have both, though unequally, prospered, he may rest assured that while the result may be damaging to the other man, it will be even more damaging to himself. Of course, I

am now speaking of prosperity that comes under normal and proper conditions.

In our industrial and social system the interests of all men are so closely inter-twined that in the immense majority of cases the straight-dealing man who by ingenuity and industry benefits himself must also benefit others. The man of great productive capacity who gets rich through guiding the labor of hundreds or thousands of other men does so, as a rule, by enabling their labor to produce more

than it would without his guidance, and both he and they share in the benefit, so that even if the share be unequal it must never be forgotten that they too are really benefited by his success.

A vital factor in the success of any enterprise is the guiding intelligence of the man at the top, and there is need in the interest of all of us to encourage rather than to discourage the activity of the exceptional men who guide average men so that their labor may result in

increased production of the kind which is demanded at the time. Normally we help the wage-worker, we help the man of small means, by making conditions such that the man of exceptional business ability receives an exceptional reward for that ability.

But while insisting with all emphasis upon this, it is also true that experience has shown that when there is no governmental restraint or supervision, some of the exceptional men use their energies,

not in ways that are for the common good, but in ways which tell against this common good; and that by so doing they not only wrong smaller and less able men—whether wage-workers or small producers and traders—but force other men of exceptional abilities themselves to do what is wrong under penalty of falling behind in the keen race for success. There is need of legislation to strive to meet such abuses. At one time or in one place this legislation may take the form of factory laws

and employers' liability laws. Under other conditions it may take the form of dealing with the franchises which derive their value from the grant of the representatives of the people. It may be aimed at the manifold abuses, far-reaching in their effects, which spring from overcapitalization. Or it may be necessary to meet such conditions as those with which I am now dealing and to strive to procure proper supervision and regulation by the National Government of all great cor-

porations engaged in interstate commerce or doing an interstate business.

There are good people who are afraid of each type of legislation; and much the same kind of argument that is now advanced against the effort to regulate big corporations has been again and again advanced against the effort to secure proper employers' liability laws or proper factory laws with reference to women and children; much the same kind of argument was advanced but five years ago

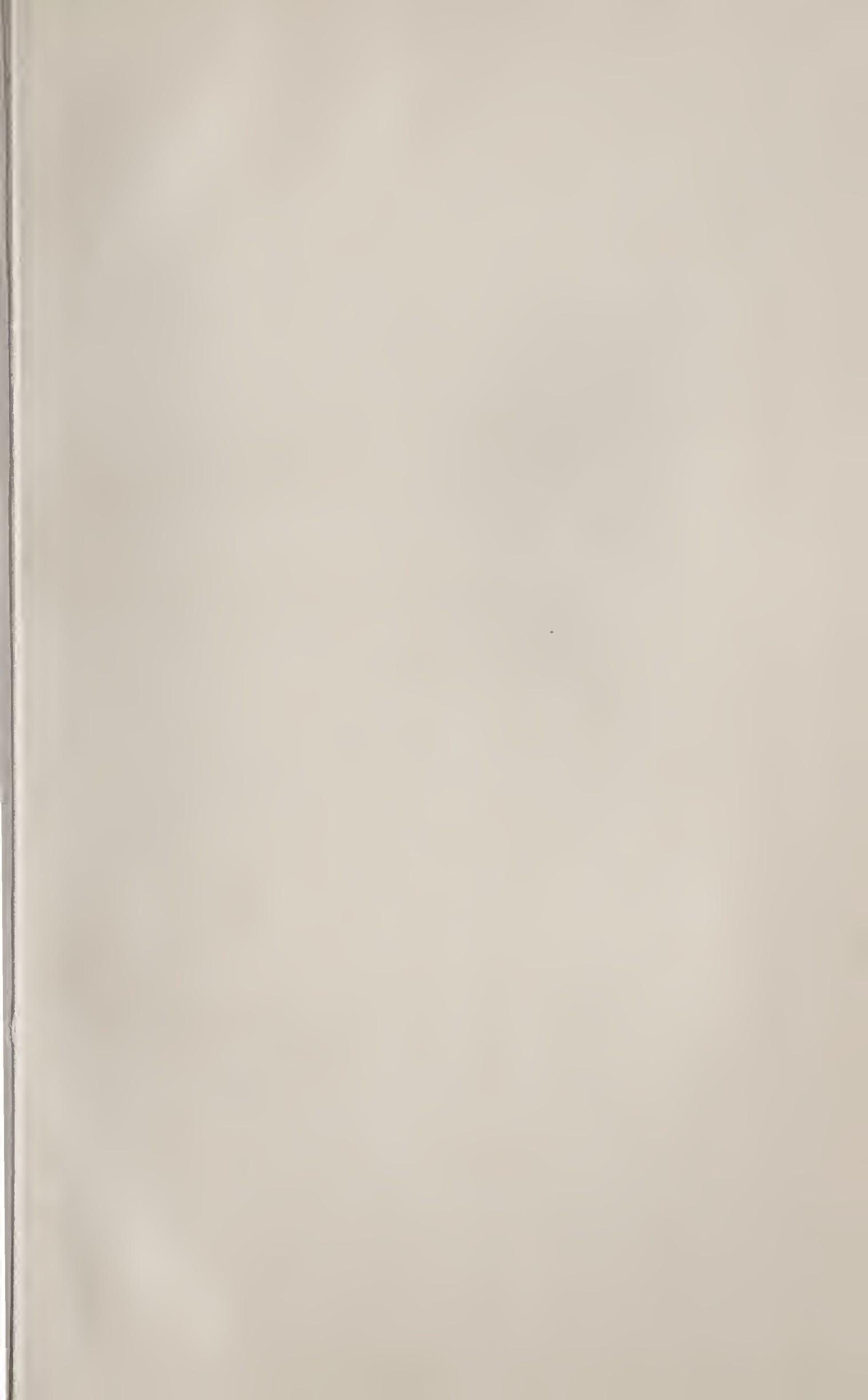
against the franchise-tax law enacted in this State while I was governor.

Of course there is always the danger of abuse if legislation of this type is approached in a hysterical or sentimental spirit, or, above all, if it is approached in a spirit of envy and hatred toward men of wealth.

We must not try to go too fast, under penalty of finding that we may be going in the wrong direction; and in any event, we ought always to proceed by evolu-

tion and not by revolution. The laws must be conceived and executed in a spirit of sanity and justice, and with exactly as much regard for the rights of the big man as for the rights of the little man—treating big man and little man exactly alike.

Our ideal must be the effort to combine all proper freedom for individual effort with some guarantee that the effort is not exercised in contravention of the eternal and immutable principles of justice.



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